

REMARKS

Claims 1-10, 13 and 17-101 are pending in the application. Claims 1-10, 13 and 17-35, and 37-101 have been rejected. Claims 54, 56, and 95-101 have been amended. No new matter has been added.

Applicants respectfully note that no rejection of claim 36 has been made. As such, Applicants submit that claim 36 is allowable for at least the reasons presented below.

Rejection of Claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 54, 55 and 58 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,555,365 ("Selby"). Amended independent claim 54 requires the following:

A database comprising:
an object table, wherein the object table comprises information regarding a user interface object; and
a communication channel table, wherein the communication channel table comprises information regarding a communication channel associated with the user interface object.

Selby does not teach associating the user interface object with communication channels. Selby focuses on binding of presentation objects with the object data they represent. However, the user interface object claimed does not provide a visual representation of a communication channel. Instead, the user interface object claimed is associated with a communication channel and enables a user to communicate using the communication channel. Therefore, all elements of independent claim 54 are not taught, and claim 54 and its dependent claims 55-58 are allowable for at least this reason.

Rejection of Claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-10 and 27-33 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,805,886 (“Skarbo”). Independent claim 1 recites the following element:

obtaining an *event communicated via an incoming communication channel* of a plurality of communication channels, wherein each communication channel of the communication channels has a media type;

The Office Action cites the following excerpt from Skarbo as showing the “event communicated via an incoming communication channel:”

The callback functions enable the address book DLL 110 to notify the appropriate client communication application program of user selection or dialing events entered [into] the address book application program 106. (Skarbo, column 5 lines 21-25).

The event described with regard to Skarbo is entered into a user interface that interacts with other client application programs. For example, Skarbo states that “the present invention relates to a method for notifying a client application program *of an event in a shared application program* in a computer system.” (Skarbo, column 2, lines 36-38.) It is unclear which components of Skarbo are considered to be the claimed communication channel(s). Furthermore, Applicants can find no description in the cited portions of Skarbo of an interaction between address book application program 106 and a communication channel or anything comparable.

The Office Action cites the fax application program 100, video conferencing application program 102, and e-mail application program 104 as evidence that each communication channel has a media type. (February 12, 2004 Office Action, page 3,

paragraph 7.) Fax communication program 100, video conferencing application program 102, and e-mail application program 104 are said to communicate via respective communication links 34, 30, and 32. (See Skarbo, column 4, lines 23-55.) Applicants respectfully submit that these communication links are not communication channels. However, Applicants will attempt to address the rejection with the understanding that fax communication program 100, video conferencing application program 102, and e-mail application program 104 provide access to communication channels.

Even in light of the foregoing assumptions, Applicants respectfully assert that “entering a user selection or dialing event into the address book application program” does not teach or suggest “obtaining an event communicated via an incoming communication channel.” One of ordinary skill in the art would understand an event communicated *via an incoming* communication channel as corresponding to, for example, an incoming fax, incoming e-mail message, incoming telephone call, and so on. Applicants have searched but cannot find a reference to such incoming communications in Skarbo.

Furthermore, Applicants respectfully submit that the address book application program of Skarbo is adapted only for providing address information for sending *outgoing* communication to a destination identified using the address book application program, as evidenced by Skarbo Fig. 5 (“user selects a destination identifier in the address book”) and Fig. 6 (“notify registered application that destination identifier was dialed”).

In addition, Fig. 2 shows one-way communications (in the form of arrows) between address book application program 106 and APIs address book API 120 and address book notification API 122, indicating that address book application program 106 calls, but does not receive data from, APIs 120 and 122. This graphical designation is consistent with Applicants' position that address book application program 106 of Skarbo does not *obtain an event communicated via an incoming communication channel*, but rather becomes aware of events via its own user interface. For these reasons, Applicants assert that all elements of independent claim 1 are not taught by Skarbo. Independent claim 1 and its dependent claims 2-10 and 27-33 are allowable for at least this reason.

Also with regard to claim 1, the Office Action states:

Skarbo does not explicitly disclose that a work item object is a work item. ... Skarbo discloses ... [that] this work item can activate user interface.

Applicants would appreciate clarification of this comment, as Applicants do not claim that "the work item object is a work item" or that "a work item can activate a user interface." Furthermore, claim 1 recites

the event corresponds to a work item available via the incoming communication channel;

Applicants have previously submitted that neither the event nor the incoming communication channel are taught by Skarbo. Applicants also respectfully submit that the work item available via the incoming communication channel is not taught by Skarbo. Furthermore, "activation of the work item object," where the work item object is associated with the work item as recited in claim 1, is not taught by Skarbo. Consequently, claims 27-31 and 33 are allowable for at least this reason.

With regard to claim 32, the Office Action states that the agents claimed are equivalent to the address book dynamic link library 110 of Figure 2. (Office Action, page 7, paragraph 20.) Applicants respectfully submit that one of skill in the art would understand that the customer service agents described in the present application are users and are not represented by a dynamic link library.

Regarding claim 4, the Office Action states:

Skarbo does not explicitly disclose providing the notification in real time with the obtaining of the event. However, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide the notification in real time as any delay between the event and notification of the event that would be perceptible by the user of the system would decrease the utility of the system.

Applicants respectfully submit that a *prima facie* case of obviousness has not been established. In addition to the claim elements not taught or suggested by Skarbo above, no suggestion or motivation to combine Skarbo with real-time technology is shown. For example, Skarbo is directed toward “notifying a client application program *of an event in a shared application program in a computer system.*” (Skarbo, column 2, lines 36-38.) Communication between application programs running on the same computer system involves inter-process communication that does not involve transmitting information across communication channels or networks, where real-time communication techniques are used. As a result, one of skill in the art would have no motivation to apply any ostensible knowledge of real-time technology for notification of events between applications running on the same computer system, either based on such ostensible knowledge or on the disclosure of Skarbo.

With regard to claims 6 and 7, Applicants have submitted with reference to claim 1 that neither a work item nor a work item object is taught by Skarbo. Thus, claims 6 and 7, which recite that “activation of the work item object is associated with an accept [or release] work item command,” are also allowable for this reason.

With regard to claims 8-10, the Office Action states that “sending the command to the command channel driver” is shown by Skarbo’s “address book DLL 110 ... perform[ing] the appropriate callback to the client communication application program according to the user event.” (Office Action, page 5, paragraph 14.) With regard to claim 8, the Office Action states that “the applications in Figure 2 are necessarily the functional equivalent of the channel drivers.” (Office Action, page 5, paragraph 14.) Applicants respectfully submit that performing a callback function to notify one application program of an event in another application program does not teach or suggest issuing a command to a communication channel or a channel driver. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 8-10 are allowable for at least this reason.

The following claims are rejected for the same reasons described above with respect to independent claim 1 and dependent claims 2-10 and 27-33:

claims 13, 17, 18, 34 and 35;
claims 19-21;
claims 22-26, 37 and 38;
claims 46-53;
claims 59-66; and
claims 67-94.

For at least the same reasons as described above for independent claim 1 and its dependent claims 2-10 and 27-33, the above-listed claims 13, 17-26, 34, 35, 37, 38, 46-53, and 59-94 are allowable. Collectively, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-

10, 13, 17-35, 37, 38, 46-53, and 59-94 have been shown to be allowable for the foregoing reasons.

With regard to claim 65, the Office Action states:

... Skarbo does not explicitly teach that the configuration determines whether the command is available to the user. However, the ability to determine whether a command is present is implied ... (citing step 202 of Figure 3, which checks whether or not a callback function exists).

Applicants respectfully submit that performing a callback function to notify one application program of an event in another application program does not teach or suggest whether a command is available to a user. Accordingly, claim 65 is allowable.

Claims 56 and 57 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,555,365 ("Selby") in view of U.S. Patent 5,805,886 ("Skarbo"). The Office Action states that Skarbo teaches "issuing a command to a communication channel" (Office Action, page 8, paragraph 27). This argument has been refuted with regard to claims 8-10 above, and claims 56 and 57 are allowable for at least the same reasons that claims 8-10 are allowable.

Furthermore, with regard to claim 57, the Office Action states that "Selby and Skarbo do not specifically disclose that the action is to set the agent status to ready or not ready. However, Selby disclosed his table is created and can be enabled/disabled depending on the attribute (citing Selby, column 6, lines 16-18). Applicants respectfully request clarification of this rejection, as Applicants can find no correspondence between the (customer service) agent status claimed and the controls presented within a user interface panel of the user interface of Selby.

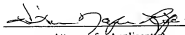
Claims 39-42 and 45 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,555,365 ("Selby"). The Office Action states that claims 39-42 are rejected for the same reason as claim 1 and that claim 45 is rejected for the same reason as claims 34 and 35. However, claims 1, 34, and 35 are rejected over the Skarbo reference, not the Selby reference. Applicants respectfully request clarification of these rejections.

Claims 43 and 44 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,555,365 ("Selby") in view of U.S. Patent 5,805,886 ("Skarbo") for the same reasons as claim 57 above. Applicants note that clarification of the rejection of claim 57 has been requested above, and that claims 43 and 44 are believed to be allowable for the same reasons as claim 57.

CONCLUSION


In view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein, the application is believed to be in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is solicited. Nonetheless, should any issues remain that might be subject to resolution through a telephonic interview, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at 512-439-5086.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Amendment, COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS, P. O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on March 12, 2004.


Attorney for Applicant(s)

5/12/04
Date of Signature

Respectfully submitted,


D'Ann Naylor Rifai
Attorney for Applicants
Reg. No. 47,026
(512) 439-5086 [Phone]
(512) 439-5099 [Fax]